

The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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Published Since 1877

Mississippians participate in annual mission effort

By Henry Hancock

A mission team consisting of members from several states recently returned from Coban, Guatemala, with an excellent report of what the Lord has done.

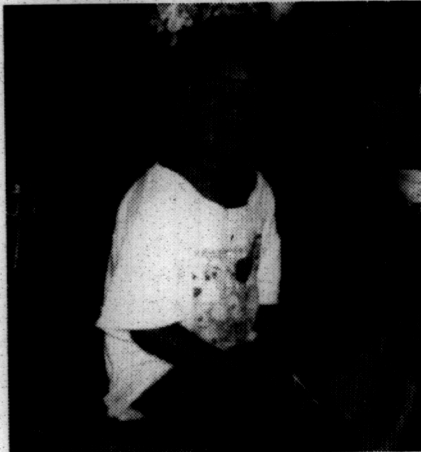
The team began making trips to Guatemala in February 1989. Coban, approximately 85 miles north of Guatemala City, was used as a base station. The team, representing several different churches in the United States, consisted of medical doctors, nurses, dentists, dental assistants, pharmacists, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), pastors from various churches, and people of many different trade backgrounds.

The burden and a need to help the people in Guatemala was revealed by the Lord to Rex Chandler, who died in May 1995. Team members Roland Turner, retired dentist from Paso Doulga; Steve Lott, pharmacist, of Hurley; Henry Hancock, construction and medical, of Vancleave made the first trip and have been consistent in going once a year.

First Church, Vancleave, handles the business and financial areas of the trips, and other area churches give support by packing pills, furnishing transportation, and praying for the team while they are gone.

Various means of support come from individual churches, pharmaceutical companies, hospitals, and some businesses. The team members pay their own way, which for most includes a sacrifice of family vacation time from their jobs. Most trips are the length of one week, with an advance team going down three or four days early to make preparations for the teams.

The team this year consisted of



A Guatemalan boy tries out a new pair of glasses which were given to him by members of a medical mission team.

40 people. Over \$250,000 in medication, dental, and medical services were provided to 3,631 people. Clothing and shoes were distributed to the children at the Escuela Oficial Rural Mixta Aldea Purah school in Chimelco.

There were 100-plus souls won to the Lord, and God healed a 12-year-old blind girl.

Clifford Grant, his wife Sunny Sue, and their children are mis-

sionaries in Coban. They have been a blessing in setting up accommodations for the teams' arrival and site preparations. The Grants are from Ohio and have been in Coban for six years.

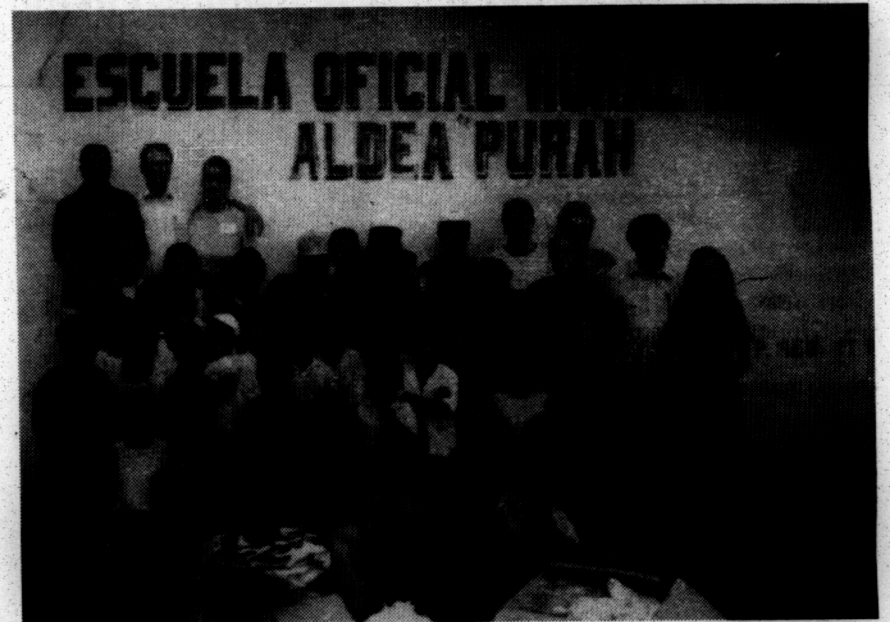
Scott and Annette Ingram and family are currently missionaries in Chapias, Mexico, and are faithful to assisting in these mission trips.

The Wayne and Laura Johnson family are missionaries in Carcha, Guatemala, and are also a blessing to the team.

Also, Gorge Mesa, Sondra, and family; Thelma Sanchez family; and Dinora Estrada, nationals in Coban, are faithful in assisting in any way they can.

Cesar Cruz, public accountant for the government of Guatemala, and his wife Carola have been vital in getting the medications through customs in Guatemala City. Those channels have been a problem since the trips were started. For more information concerning the next trip, call (601) 826-4382.

Hancock is a member of Larue Church, Jackson Association.



Before the advance team left the U.S. for Guatemala, a plea was made for clothing and shoes to be distributed at this school, the Escuela Oficial Rural Mixta Aldea Purah. Participating in the distribution of several boxes of clothes, shoes, and toys are (left to right): back row, Hermahno Cesar Cruz, public accountant, Guatemala customs; Henry Hancock, Guatemala mission team member; Carola Cruz, wife of Cesar; Jose Antonio Quim Bac, Maestro de Educacion; Rebecca Ruff and LuJean Trumble, mission team members; Clifford Grant, missionary in Coban; Lauren Enswiler, mission team member; second row, Alma Elena Turckheim, Maestra de Educacion Primaria; Maribel Guerrero de Leal, Maestra de Educacion Primaria; and all the children of the school in Chimelco, Guatemala. (Photos by mission team members Sue Bennett and Emily Watkins)

Gore, Vail featured on Honduras convention program

Sam Gore, art professor at Mississippi College, and Bill Vail, pastor of North Oxford Church, Oxford, spoke to the Honduras Baptist Convention at El Progreso, Jan. 17-19.

Gore was featured on the program on three occasions when he prepared sculptures depicting the head of Christ in a public plaza and at Bethany Baptist Church, where the convention met.

Vail accompanied Gore and spoke on two occasions during the convention program which emphasized evangelization. During 1996, the

Honduras Convention will focus on spiritual preparation for a nationwide evangelistic thrust during 1997.

Mississippians Stanley Stamps and his wife Glenna were given plaques in honor of their 13 years of service as Southern Baptist missionaries to Honduras and teachers in the theological seminary program.

The Stampses, who live in El Progreso and are members of Bethany Baptist Church, will leave Honduras in July for furlough prior to retir-

ing in 1997. That year will conclude nearly 35 years as career missionaries.

A native of Prentiss, Stanley is a graduate of Mississippi College and Golden Gate Seminary. Whitesand Church in Jeff Davis County is his home church. He pastored in Columbia and served as director of missions in the Mississippi Association prior to missionary appointment.

Glenna is a native of Hillsboro, Texas, and is a graduate of Mary Hardin Baylor University and Golden Gate Seminary.

Too much tube

Years of warnings, backed up by study after study, apparently haven't had much impact on the troubling television habits of American families, according to research by Stephen Sumerel, director of family life and substance abuse for the State Baptist Convention of North Carolina. "Television viewing is the second most time-consuming activity in our nation. We only spend more time sleeping, and working comes in a close third," he said. Sumerel pointed out that while the television is on for seven hours each day in an average American household, mothers spend about 15 minutes each day giving their children undivided attention, while fathers give less than four minutes each day of undivided attention to their children. "The amount of time spent in front of a common household appliance is nothing short of revolutionary. The average American child whose home is connected to cable will be exposed to 32,000 murders and 250,000 acts of violence," he said. He suggested parents spend less time trying to ban certain television programming and more time talking and playing with their children.

Managing stress

"The only people I know who are not stressed are in the cemetery," quipped Norris Smith, a consultant for the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville. Speaking to a ministers' leadership conference at Glorieta (N.M.) Conference Center, Smith noted ways that ministers and others can cope with stress. "Coping means equalizing the power of stress so you can control it rather than it controlling you," he said. "Ministers get so busy feeding others they don't allow God to nurture them. Get aside where you simply let the father feed you," he said. Make time for vigorous exercise, healthy eating, and adequate rest, he pointed out. "What helps is regularity of sleep. This is not easy for persons in the ministry. We have to work at it," he said. Manage time more effectively, keep ambition in check, and cultivate a sense of humor to serve as "an emotional shock absorber for the harsh realities of life," Smith said. Be aware of negative emotions, he added, and "live by grace. Then our best self is freed to do what God wants us to do in the first place."

Looking Back...

10 years ago

Douglas Clifton Seale, a top-ranking Southwestern Seminary student from Meridian, is killed when an unknown gunman fires five random shots through the living room window of his residence located just off the seminary's Fort Worth campus.

20 years ago

The late William Hal Furr, the Baptist minister credited with establishing the Department of Philosophy and Religions at the University of Mississippi, is honored with an endowed Chair of Religious Studies at the university.

50 years ago

T.L. Holcomb, former Mississippi pastor currently serving as executive secretary of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, is the featured speaker at the centennial anniversary celebration of First Church, Pontotoc.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Guy Henderson

The power of the powerless

Many people are considered "powerless" by the stronger members of society. Whether in the area of economics, education, race, or ethnic origin, there are the strong and the weak.

This is a truth witnessed in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Gustavo Gutierrez wrote a book, **The Power of the Poor in History**, in which he declared that often the real power of significant change in history comes from the periphery. The oppressed, from the underside of history, can alter history.

Eldin Villafane, in his book **Seek the Peace of the City**, reflects on the plight of the urban ministry, and he strikes the same note related to the oppressed.

There are "poor" and "powerless" churches in our inner cities — as well as the countryside — which have a fellowship in the Spirit that is awesome. Don't underestimate the power of the small congregation. It may be perceived as being powerless by the power-hungry world.

What could have been more powerless than Christ on the Cross? "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and save us" was the cry from the outer world. Think of the redemption of man and the social transformation which have taken place because of the "powerless"

cross. It was the epitome of futility and disgrace. This instrument of powerlessness revealed that the "weakness of God is stronger than man's strength."

Jesus said to the apostle Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my power is made perfect in weakness..." and Paul declared, "for when I am weak then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:9-10).

Much of our best music, best writing, and best examples originate with the down-trodden and oppressed. They are more than just children born in the ghetto. The realization that change must take place is far more likely to happen here than it will be contemplated on "silk stocking row." The wealthy are seldom interested in any great change. This principle holds true in secular history.

Alan Moorehead in **The Russian Revolution** described the Czarist army in 1916. Some 15 million men were called up and sent untrained and ill-equipped to the trenches. The dead were never counted, but 5 to 8 million is the estimate.

When the war was over, the peasant soldiers returned home. At best their income had never amounted to more than \$150 a year. They lived in terribly crowded hovels, with no floors, little food. Wages had gone up 100% in

two years; food prices increased 400% in the same time span. They detested the nobility and a revolution was aborning. The power of the weak was soon unleashed.

India's Mahatma Gandhi shunned the halls of power and sat with the homeless and the helpless, and there experienced the power of the weak. He arose from obscurity and as a representative of the powerless became the most powerful man in India.

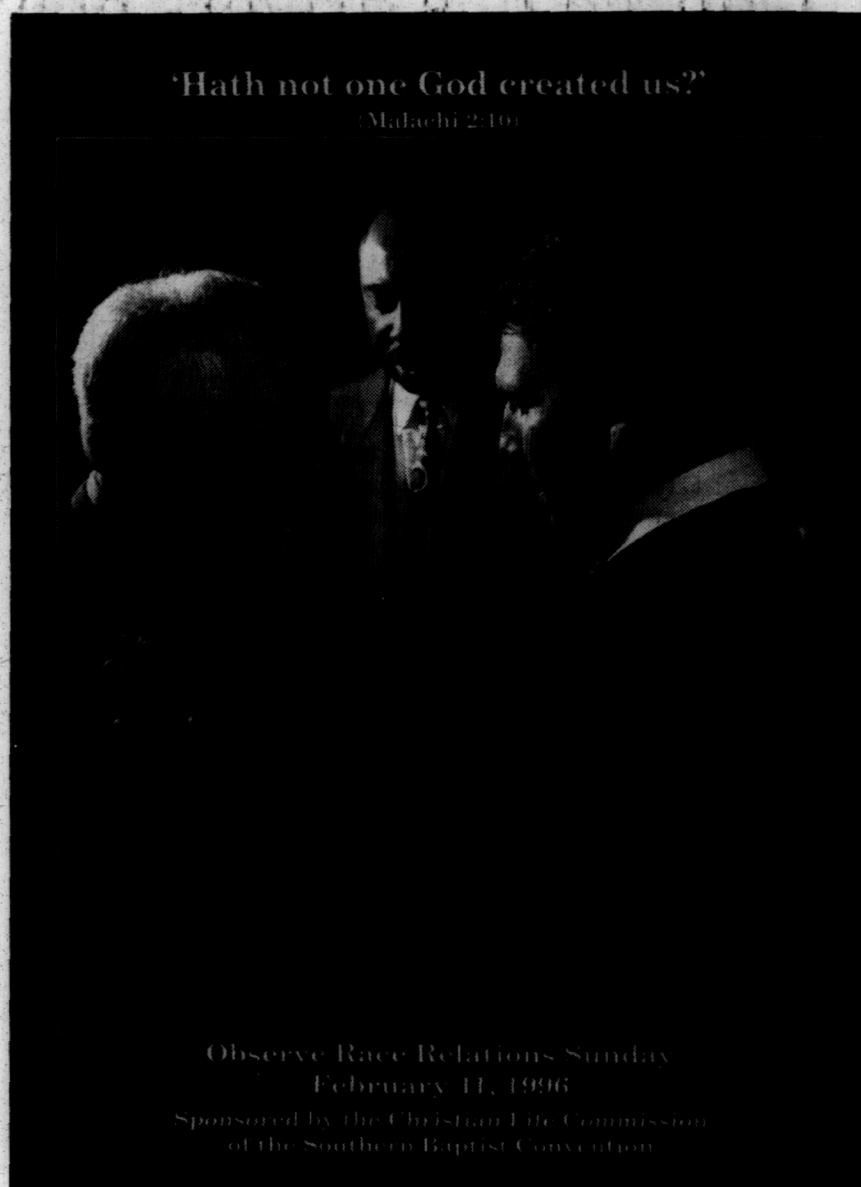
Pharaoh had the army; the slaves had nothing, but look who won. God, ever concerned about the weak and the down-trodden, was attentive to their cry. He takes a dim view of those "who eat up my people as they eat bread" (Psalm 14:4).

Jesus came to serve; he said he would "preach the gospel to the poor, heal the broken hearted, preach deliverance to the captives" (Luke 4:18). May we never forget which side he is on.

A society with many poor people and a few rich people will have difficulty enduring. Thank God for the strength of the middle class in America. Who knows how close we were to a revolution in the depression of the 1930s. Perhaps every generation has to fight this battle. Our beleaguered inner cities testify to the growing power of the weak.

'Hath not one God created us?'

(Malachi 2:10)



Observe Race Relations Sunday

February 11, 1996

Sponsored by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention

Race Relations Sunday, Feb. 11 —

"Hath not one God created us?"

By Gary L. Frost

Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers? (Mal. 2:10).

Malachi is listed as one of the minor prophets; however, we know there is nothing minor about his message. His was the last Old Testament voice crying in the wilderness before another Voice joined the chorus some 400 years later.

Though little is known about Malachi, we know he was burdened to see integrity in the midst of God's people. He lived in a time of religious hypocrisy, and longed to see genuine spiritual passion replace lifeless ceremonial form.

Malachi's words were not addressed to the world in general, but to the children of God in particular and to the leaders specifically. He wrote to Israel, the chosen of God, to verbally chastise them for mistreating their fellow

Jews. He appealed to the covenant made with Abraham as a basis for their commitment to God and their concern for their brothers.

This passage obviously applies



to our contemporary situation. Those who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ are now the beneficiaries of a better

covenant and are now members of God's great household. Peter wrote that we are "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God..." (1 Peter 2:9, NIV). We should no longer see our primary identity as Negroid or Caucasoid, or Mongoloid, but now, in becoming partakers of the divine nature, we can identify with a new race of people; we are "Regenezoid."

Some would suggest that God's agenda is to "homogenize" the church and to blend us all together into one bland expression of uniformity. But God's plan is not uniformity; it is unity. Unity speaks of oneness of purpose and commonality of character. It does not speak of identical expression and regimentation of behavior.

A refreshing wind is blowing across our land as believers in Jesus Christ surmount cultural differences and "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). We see God

THE FRAGMENTS

Danger — Explosives

You can cause a spark on water and nothing happens. A spark in a steel factory is not noticed. A spark in a gun powder factory can trigger an explosion.

All day long there are sparks striking the various emotional elements of our lives. What happens when a spark hits the "prejudice" area, or when it hits in the field of anger, or the desire for revenge?

We can do little to alter the circumstances in life's pathway; we can do something about how we react to those circumstances. Explosions are unbecoming for a child of the King... temper displayed in public borders on indecent exposure.

bringing his family together. Believers of various nationalities and ethnic backgrounds are unifying in Christian oneness. While maintaining their cultural distinctiveness, with a single voice they declare that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Malachi asked, "Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, by profaning the covenant of our fathers?" This rhetorical question calls not for an answer, but for an examination. God compels us to pursue a visible manifestation of our

Certainly, it is nerve-wracking for soldiers in Bosnia to search for land mines. They have detectors, "how-to" instructions, and are expecting the mines.

It is different journeying through life, not expecting the emotional mines, then walking into one. "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice... and be kind to one another" (Eph. 4:31-32).

While "profanity is the product of a demented mind, trying to express itself," kindness is a language the dumb can speak and the deaf can understand. — GH

invisible unity in Christ.

My prayer is that the church will clearly demonstrate that "there is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:4-6).

Frost is pastor of Rising Star Church in Youngstown, Ohio. He was elected second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1994, and re-elected in 1995.

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Church bus drivers now subject to drug tests, other regulations

Churches that use buses to shuttle people to and from various events must follow new drug-testing guidelines and other regulations from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) that went into effect on Jan. 1.

That's the word from Ricky L. Parker of Compliance Associates, a Jackson-based alcohol and drug testing consortium.

"The Motor Carrier Safety Act of 1984 expanded the authority of the USDOT to regulate safety of interstate transportation of passengers by commercial motor vehicles. This rule has been expanded to cover not only interstate, but also intrastate activities," Parker said.

Robert F. Sumicek, a drug-free work force expert with DuPont and Associates, a consulting firm with offices in Rockville, Md., Chicago, Ill., and Little Rock,

Ark., detailed the regulations in the January 1996 issue of **Youth Ministry Update**, a publication of the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville.

Sumicek pointed out that owners of vehicles weighing 26,001 pounds or more that carry 15 or more passengers (including the driver) are now required without exception to implement a random drug and alcohol testing program for their drivers.

Church bus drivers — volunteers included — must now pass the same stringent testing process to which airline pilots and train engineers are required to submit, according to Sumicek.

Sumicek listed five points at which the testing is to be done:

- Pre-employment (meaning before a person drives a bus for the first time).
- Random.

By William H. Perkins Jr.

- Post-accident.
- Return to duty.
- Follow-up after a positive test result (meaning drugs were detected during the test).

"January 1, 1996, is the implementation date for all persons driving passenger vehicles with 15 passengers or more (including the driver) to be in a random drug and alcohol testing program," he reported.

"Small groups may join consortium pool groups (where several small churches join together to share administration and expenses). Training of supervisors is mandatory. I urge all of you who have bus services for your ministry to act now to implement this important program," Sumicek said.

For more information, contact the Church Administration/

Pastoral Ministries Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

For compliance and small group consortium information, contact Parker at Compliance Associates, 1124 Highway 469 North, Jackson, MS 39208-8732. Telephone: (601) 939-7232.

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

The Baptist Record

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No convention... yet

FORT WORTH (ABP) — It's premature for conservative Texas Baptists to form their own state convention, but their leaders are putting a statewide network into place, according to Miles Seaborn, president of Southern Baptists of Texas.

Seaborn, pastor of Birchman Church, Fort Worth, spoke to about 100 people at a "fellowship" meeting at a Fort Worth hotel after the Jan. 16 evening session of the Texas evangelism conference.

Messengers to the 1995 General Convention of Texas in San Antonio elected a moderate slate of officers and adopted a budget reducing funds to the Southern Baptist Convention.

Those actions fueled speculation that dissatisfied conservatives in Texas might create their own state convention. Seaborn said such a move is not imminent.

A study committee met earlier in the day, Seaborn said, to begin charting the organization's future course. Offering few specifics, he simply said the group was developing a plan for reaching people, communicating concerns, encouraging like-minded Texas Baptists, and bringing more young pastors into the fold.

An unnamed person, whom Seaborn called the group's "secret weapon," met with the committee to help them develop a strategy. They will meet again next month.

Joining Seaborn on the study committee were Claude Thomas, Euleess; Rick Scarborough, Pearland; Brant O'Hair, Lubbock; Gary Miller, Fort Worth; and Gerald Smith, Arlington.

Texas two-step...

Baylor University drops longtime ban on dancing

WACO, Texas (ABP) — Baylor University has dropped its traditional policy banning dancing on campus at the Baptist school in Waco, Texas.

Baylor President Robert Sloan, a Baptist preacher, announced the change recently in an informal question-and-answer period with students.

Students have pushed for lifting the ban for years, but administrators have in the past resisted the change. The policy has long been the butt of jokes about Southern Baptists' social conservatism and has come to symbolize Baylor's struggle to maintain

a delicate balance between the school's academic prestige and its Baptist roots.

The dancing ban emerged from "a particular Southern evangelical notion of piety" that associated "a good Christian life" with avoiding vices like drinking, dancing, and smoking, Baptist sociologist Nancy Ammerman told the **Dallas Morning News**.

Other Protestant denominations abandoned the ban on dancing years ago, Ammerman said.

About half of Baylor's 12,000 students are Baptist, but even Baptists have softened their stance on dancing.

"It's not the great issue of life," said Tim Hedquist, church administrator at First Church of Dallas. "I don't hear the preacher getting up and preaching about it."

Besides, "most of us as Bap-

tists are too clumsy to dance," he said.

Not everyone is so nonchalant about the change, however. Some critics view it as evidence that Baylor is slipping into secularism since moving to distance itself from the Baptist General Convention of Texas five years ago.

Miles Seaborn, president of Southern Baptists of Texas, a coalition of conservative churches, said dances "are not the atmosphere you want to create to generate wholesome, godly living."

"Every dance is not going to turn into an orgy," Seaborn said, "but on the other hand we know that with the music we have in this day and time, the atmosphere, the dress, the emotions and everything else out there — we're all human."

Jan. Cooperative Program gifts almost surpass historical mark

NASHVILLE (BP) — Cooperative Program (CP) gifts for the month of January totaled the second-largest in history with \$15,241,892 and almost 10% over a year ago, according to Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee.

The January 1996 total is surpassed only by the January 1988 total of \$15,514,367, the largest in CP history for a month.

"These mission gifts from Southern Baptists are a tremendous testimony to our shared vision of reaching the world for Jesus Christ," Chapman said. "It is very encouraging and, obviously, the Lord is blessing Southern Baptists in this vision."

The January 1996 total is \$1,295,728 above the month in 1995, or a 9.29% increase. For the four months of the SBC fiscal year — October through January — CP gifts total

Over the top

Members of First Church, Orlando, Fla., gave \$1 million through the Cooperative Program in 1995, becoming the first in Florida Baptist history.

Jim Henry, former Mississippi pastor and current SBC president, is pastor of the Orlando church.

According to Jim Powell of the Stewardship Commission, only two churches in the SBC have given \$1 million through the Cooperative Program.

In 1989, First Church, Midland, Texas, and North Phoenix Church in Arizona each reached the million-dollar mark. The Midland church gave another million dollars in 1990.

from individuals, churches, state conventions and fellowships for distribution according to the 1995-96 Cooperative Program Allocation Budget.



Experiencing evangelism

Members of the choir and orchestra of Colonial Heights Church, Jackson, perform at the 1996 Mississippi Baptist Evangelism Conference, held Jan. 29-30 at Colonial Heights Church. Richard Powell is pastor of Colonial Heights, and Larry Kulcke is minister of music. For a full report on the conference, please turn to page 5. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



Strack in Mississippi

Southern Baptist evangelist Jay Strack of Orlando, Fla., a former vice-president of the Southern Baptist Convention, makes a point during his sermon Jan. 30 at the 1996 Mississippi Baptist Evangelism Conference, held this year at Colonial Heights Church, Jackson. For a full report on the conference, please see opposite page. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

CBF leaves questions after council meeting

ATLANTA (BP) — The questions of who will be the next Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) coordinator and whether the group will become a separate denomination remained unanswered as the CBF coordinating council met in Atlanta Jan. 25-27.

Organized in 1991, the fellowship is a group of Baptists opposed to the leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention. The 76-member coordinating council meets three times a year, and the fellowship has a summer general assembly.

During the January meeting, the council elected a coordinator of Baptist principles to lead the CBF on such issues as theological education, religious liberty, and ethnic inclusion, said search committee chairman John Tyler of Webster Grove, Mo. The council also learned of a 26% increase in annual receipts.

Cecil Sherman, coordinator since 1992, will retire in June. The coordinator search committee hopes to present a nominee during the April 18-20 coordinating council meeting, "but we will not press ourselves to do so," said Carolyn Crumpler of Ohio, coordinator search committee chairman and former CBF moderator.

The committee received more than 300 suggestions for the type of leader CBF needs, Crumpler said. She said 34 people were recommended for the post.

Last summer the general assembly created a commission to consider whether CBF should become an independent denomination.

"Our assignment is not to bring recommendations," Randall Lolley, study commission chairman, told the coordinating council. "The

report will be disappointing to those people wanting a specific road map" for the CBF's future, said Lolley, of North Carolina.

The commission is seeking a consensus of opinion on the issue, Lolley said. Its research will be compiled and discussed during the April coordinating council meeting and published in time for the CBF general assembly, June 27-29, he said.

In other business, the council elected Gary Parker, pastor of First Church, Jefferson City, Mo., coordinator of Baptist principles effective, Feb. 26.

A South Carolina native, Parker is former pastor of churches in Texas, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Missouri. He is the author of mystery novels as well as the book, **Principles Worth Protecting**. He received his bachelor's degree from Furman University, master's degree from Southeastern Seminary, and doctorate from Baylor University.

Parker described leaving the pastorate as a frightening time but added he is excited about beginning this "significant, vital, and holy work."

In a financial report, Sherman said 1995 CBF gifts were up 26.7% from the previous year. Last year's receipts included \$9.9 million from churches and \$1.3 million from individuals, he said. The number of contributing churches increased from 1,377 to 1,450.

The 1995-96 CBF budget allocates 59% for global missions, 23.62% for Baptist principles, 12.98% for administration, and 4.4% for church resources.

Currently the CBF supports 100 missionaries and 25 staff positions.

Critics question Clinton's plan to reduce teenage pregnancies

WASHINGTON (BP) — President Bill Clinton named rejected surgeon general nominee Henry Foster and a panel of citizens to lead a campaign against teenage pregnancy, but supporters of sexual abstinence expressed doubt the resultant strategy for solving the problem would be acceptable.

The president announced Jan. 29 the appointment of Foster as his special adviser on teen pregnancy. Clinton also named the first members of a panel to lead the privately funded National Campaign to Reduce Teenage Pregnancy.

Among the members are actress Whoopi Goldberg; MTV President Judy McGrath; former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop; former Sen. Warren Rudman (R-N.H.); former New Jersey Gov. Tom Kean; and Andrew Young, former Atlanta mayor and former ambassador to the United Nations.

Foster, who will be Clinton's liaison to the panel, failed to generate enough support last year to be confirmed by the Senate as surgeon general. Opposition to Foster was based largely on his performance of abortions and the changing estimate of how many he had done. He also had advocated the distribution of contraceptives to minors without parental consent.

"Once again, the president is far more perceptive in diagnosing

the problem than he is in prescribing a cure," said Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission (CLC).

Gracie Hsu, policy analyst for the Family Research Council (FRC), questioned why Clinton would appoint someone who espoused a program which had failed in reducing teen pregnancy or teen sexual activity. Participants in Foster's program, "I Have a Future," had higher rates of sexual activity than those not in the program in Nashville, according to a Carnegie Corporation study.

"Evaluation studies are crystal clear: The only programs that really work to reduce teen pregnancy are abstinence programs," Hsu said in a prepared statement. "During his State of the Union address, President Clinton noted that the teen pregnancy rate has dropped for two years in a row.... (T)een pregnancy is declining because more teens are choosing abstinence despite all of the federal government's efforts to promote the contrary."

Teen pregnancy, Clinton said in announcing Foster's appointment, is a "moral problem and a personal problem," as well as a "very significant economic and social problem for the United States."

The backgrounds of some of Clinton's campaign leaders are

sure to increase doubts the effort will focus on abstinence.

Goldberg has had four abortions and has been an outspoken advocate of abortion rights. McGrath's cable network has been criticized for telecasting videos with sexually explicit themes. Koop, an evangelical Christian, included condoms as part of the solution for the HIV transmission problem during his service as surgeon general in the 1980s.

In its 1995 meeting in Atlanta, messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention voted overwhelmingly to oppose Foster's confirmation. The resolution acknowledged Foster's "impressive academic and professional credentials" but cited the following as some of the reasons for opposing his confirmation: his performance of abortions; his support for abortion on demand, including his position as a public policy advocate for Planned Parenthood Federation of America; his advocacy of the distribution of condoms and contraceptives to minors without parental consent; and his sterilization of mentally impaired women in the 1970s.

Clinton nominated Foster to the surgeon general's post in early February after firing controversial Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders in December 1994.

CBF head defends AIDS manual; cites criticism as "Baptist politics"

NASHVILLE (BP) — An 80-page HIV/AIDS manual mailed to Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) churches in mid-1994, and available at the 1994 and 1995 CBF general assembly meetings, is a "little bit out of date" and not being promoted anymore, stated Cecil Sherman, coordinator of the organization of Baptist moderates based in Atlanta.

"I think Mr. Mitchell is dealing with Baptist politics, when you take a two-year-old piece, thrust it forward and try to act like it makes us open to the possibility that homosexuals are that way by genetics rather than choice," Sherman remarked in a telephone interview after reviewing a memorandum by C. Ben Mitchell, consultant on biomedical and life issues for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission (CLC).

Mitchell had prepared a critique of the CBF AIDS packet at the request of CLC President Richard Land after the CLC was made aware of the CBF project last fall.

In discussing Mitchell's assessment of the section of the manual dealing with sexual orientation, Sherman said there were parts of the manual he did not agree with and would have left out. In addition, he said he agrees with Mitchell's assessment that the sources are unbalanced.

"But that does not destroy the usefulness of that packet to anybody who has a genuine care for what's happening to hurting people," Sherman said, calling Mitchell's assessment "severe."

"I do disagree with parts of it, but my disagreeing with it may not make it false. Your disagreeing with it may not make it false. The manual may turn out to be right," Sherman asserted.

Sherman also noted the CBF at large has not taken a stand on the morality of homosexuality, and he pointed to a 1995 decision by the CBF coordinating council to stop funding to the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America for their statement supporting "gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered persons" in active ministry positions.

WMU's AIDS resource kit entails prayer, ministry

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) — Prayer, education, and a plan of action are components of the Woman's Missionary Union "Project HELP: AIDS Resource Kit."

The focus of the 1996 project is to share the gospel while meeting the physical and spiritual needs of those affected by AIDS, according to information in the packet. In no way diminishing the massive destruction of the epidemic, the resources point to the hurting human beings behind the numbers in an effort to rally Christians to not ignore PWAs (persons with AIDS) and their families.

The ministry plan offered in the kit calls for interaction on four levels: prayer, education, local ministry and inter-

national ministry.

Through a community assessment, church members and organizations are encouraged to discover the scope of those who are affected who live close by and to learn what their ministry needs are.

Ministry ideas include help for caregivers, families, and PWAs. Additionally, information is included about how to develop a "care team" to provide support to a person with AIDS or other devastating disease and to their loved ones.

The resource kit also includes a laminated prayer card and an order form for other WMU, CLC, and BSSB resources and can be purchased by calling WMU's toll free line at (800) 968-7301.

Soul-winning urged at '96 Evangelism Conference

A strong slate of Mississippi preachers and musicians, along with top Southern Baptist leaders, led the program at the 1996 Mississippi Baptist Evangelism Conference Jan. 29-30 at Colonial Heights Church, Jackson.

The conference theme was, "And He Brought Him to Jesus" (John 1:42). Winning people to Christ and encouraging pastors were emphasized in every message.

Vocational evangelist Gary Bowlin of Brandon said the greatest act of a Christian is to bring someone to Christ. He challenged pastors and lay people to share their faith and have a burden for the unsaved.

James Fancher, interim director

of the Evangelism Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), spoke of "Four Reluctant Witnesses."

Stan Fornea, pastor of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton, encouraged attendants to "remember" — our lostness, the joy of our salvation, the call of God, and the needs of the world.

Bill Causey, MBCB executive director-treasurer, preached on "See the Multitude" and the attitude of Jesus toward people.

Former Meridian resident Peyton Moore, currently serving as executive director of Golden Triangle Association in Beaumont, Texas, addressed the group on the Watchman and his responsibilities.

Ken Alford, pastor of Bell Shoals Church, Brandon, Fla., and former pastor of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton, used "The Call is For All" as his message and called on all believers to be involved.

Former Mississippi pastor Jim Henry, president of the Southern Baptist Convention and current pastor of First Church, Orlando, Fla., emphasized missions and said God is blessing Southern Baptists.

Ronnie Floyd, chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee and pastor of First Church, Springdale, Ark., spoke of things that will keep a church from growing.

Former Jacksonian Buster Pray, minister of music at First Church, Springdale, Ark., led the music for the conference.

Dot Pray of Jackson, Buster's mother and longtime keyboard consultant in the MBCB Church Music Department, was conference organist.

Irene Martin of Forest served as conference pianist.

James Neal Fancher of Oklahoma City, son of (interim MBCB evangelism director) James and Ewilda Fancher of Florence, was the conference's featured soloist, along with Jenni Till of Dallas.

The choir and orchestra of Colonial Heights Church also performed at the conference.

Other speakers included:

— Joe Ratliff, pastor of Brentwood Church, Houston, Texas, the largest predominantly African-American congregation in the Southern Baptist Convention. He described how God led him through personal obstacles to become what God wanted him to be.

— Richard Harris, director of the Personal Evangelism Department of the Home Mission Board in suburban Atlanta.

— Rodney Gage, Fort Worth, Texas-based youth evangelist, who lamented the plight of America's young people and urged attendants to reach out to young people in the midst of their despair.

— John Bisagno, pastor of First Church, Houston, who spoke on "He That Wins Souls Is Wise."

— Jack Strack, evangelist from Orlando, who declared that there is a spiritual famine in the land and that people will eat anything during a famine.

— J. Garland McKee of Clinton, recently-retired MBCB evangelism director, who served as host of the conference.

(Photos by William H. Perkins Jr.)



Henry (front), Buster Pray (middle), Dot Pray (rear)



Bisagno (right) with MBCB evangelism consultant Carlie Hill of Jackson



Till (front), McKee (seated left), Henry (seated right)



Floyd

1995 Baptisms in Mississippi

Total Baptisms

Rank	Church	Location	Baptisms	Pastor
1.	Trinity	Southaven	291	Jim Butler
2.	First	Jackson	145	Frank Pollard
3.	Northcrest	Meridian	140	Malcolm Lewis
4.	Park Place	Brandon	136	Bobby Williamson
5.	Harrisburg	Tupelo	126	Forrest Sheffield
6.	Colonial Hills	Southaven	123	Steve Bennett
7.	East Heights	Tupelo	113	Steve Bain
8.	Harmony	Crystal Springs	106	Clark Stewart
9.	Crossgates	Brandon	105	Barry Clingan
10.	Highland	Laurel	89	Dennis W. Sewell
11.	First	Madison	88	John Arthur Temple
12.	Temple	Hattiesburg	84	Dean Register
13.	First	Richland	82	Chuck Herring
14.	First	Brandon	78	Gene Henderson
15.	Salem Heights	Laurel	69	D.J. Benson
16.	Roseland Park	Picayune	67	John G. Brock
17.	First	Olive Branch	61	P.J. Scott
18.	Emmanuel	Greenville	59	John R. Noble
19.	Morrison Heights	Clinton	58	Stan Fornea
20.	Goodrum	Vicksburg	57	Thomas G. Simmons Jr.

Ratio of Baptisms to Church Membership

Rank	Church	Location	Members	Baptisms	Ratio	Pastor
1.	Jacinto	Rienzi	59	23	2.565	Edwin Richardson
2.	Riverside	Monticello	77	24	3.208	Fred Morris
3.	Antioch	Lexington	43	12	3.583	Riley Ainsworth
4.	First Faith	Batesville	94	24	3.917	Eulouis V. Ginn
5.	New Pleasantdale	Philadelphia	100	24	4.167	Jack Garnett
6.	Good Hope	Louisville	245	56	4.375	Noel Dear
7.	Lakeside	Becker	40	9	4.444	Robert Fowlkes
8.	Rivercrest Fellowship	Jackson	29	6	4.833	Steve Street
9.	Greenwood Springs	Caledonia	25	5	5.000	John Walden
10.	Gatesville	Crystal Springs	57	11	5.182	Millard D. Mackey
11.	Eastview	Columbus	47	9	5.222	Bob Myers
12.	First	Waveland	39	7	5.571	Jodie Cothen
13.	Larue	Perkinston	124	22	5.636	Burnice Havard
14.	First	Houlka	284	50	5.680	Gary Blair
15.	McIvor	Como	30	5	6.000	Robert Smith Jr.
16.	First	Nicholson	239	37	6.459	Timothy L. Martin
17.	Trinity	Aberdeen	100	15	6.667	Wayne Vines
18.	Thompson Hill	Beaumont	60	9	6.667	Tommy Erkhart
19.	West Carthage Mission	Carthage	27	4	6.750	Jack Nazary
20.	Calvary	Hattiesburg	89	13	6.846	Clay A. Ingram

Source: MBCB Evangelism Department

Carey E. Cox, retired Miss. minister and Foundation head, dies at age 87

Carey E. Cox, 87, a retired Baptist minister, died of a stroke Feb. 1 at his daughter's home in Natchez.

Services were held Feb. 6 at First Church, Brandon, with burial in Brandon Memorial Cemetery.

Cox had lived in the Rankin County area for 26 years.

He formerly pastored First Church, Brandon, for 16 years.

Cox retired after 10 years as executive secretary of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation.

He was a former president of the

Southern Baptist Foundation executive secretaries' national association.



Cox

Cox also pastored churches in Kemper County, West Point, Prattville, Ala., Hazlehurst, and Terry.

He was the widower of Annette B. Cox, who died Dec. 5.

A Georgia native, Cox attended Mercer University in Georgia before transferring to

Mississippi College.

After graduation, he attended Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

"He pastored churches around DeKalb while he was a student at Mississippi College," said his daughter, Sarah Cotton of Natchez.

"He worked his way through school by pastoring little country churches in Kemper County," she said.

Other survivors include: sons Ernest of Melbourne, Fla., and Robert of Staunton, Va.; six grandchildren, and four great-grandchildren.



Heart for young people

Texas youth evangelist Rodney Gage, son of Southern Baptist evangelist Freddie Gage, addressed the spiritual needs of a forlorn generation of young people during his sermon Jan. 30 at the Mississippi Baptist Evangelism Conference. For a full report on the conference, hosted by Colonial Heights Church, Jackson, please turn to page 5. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

MC Law School prof warns of IRS action for church political activity

NASHVILLE (BP) — While churches and religious leaders have been involved in political issues for hundreds of years, such involvement in 1996 could jeopardize a church's tax-exempt status if U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) guidelines are ignored.

Bill Townsend, assistant dean at the Mississippi College School of Law in Jackson, acknowledged during a Jan. 29-31 legal issues seminar at the Baptist Sunday School Board that societal issues compel Christians to be involved in political processes. But, he told pastors and other church staff persons, to protect the church's federal tax-exempt status, "do not use tax-exempt funds to lobby or to conduct a political campaign."

Two prohibitions from IRS apply to

church status, he continued: "Absolutely no involvement in political campaigns and no substantial involvement in legislative lobbying."

Southern Baptist polity plays a significant role in whether one speaks for a church or for themselves as a private citizen, he observed, in contrast to denominations with a hierarchy. Using church stationery to send a letter of political endorsement, for example, violates both denominational polity and IRS codes.

In general, lobbying includes any effort to influence legislation by attempting to affect the opinions of the general public or any segment of the public, or communications with members to directly encourage them to lobby or to encourage them to encourage others to lobby.

Flagrant violations are most likely to attract the unfavorable attention of the IRS, he said, in contrast to a church staff person who writes an occasional letter about a political issue.

In the matter of campaigning prohibitions, tax-exempt organizations have "an absolute bar" against their participation or intervention in a campaign for or against any candidate for any public office, Townsend said.

"You can do everything possible to divorce yourself from an organization in making a political statement, but everyone knows who you are and what you do," he said, and "sometimes issues are

closely linked with candidates."

Voter report cards, sometimes distributed to church members, can be clearly designed to move persons toward a candidate or group of candidates. To avoid problems with such material, he suggested, list all the candidates, include a range of issues and evaluate whether the cards are directed toward the general public rather than only to church members.

Individuals, he said, are free to fully participate in campaigning and lobbying. Churches may encourage members to participate as citizens in the political and legislative process.

"The rules are in place and should be carefully considered before committing one's church to a path that could jeopardize its exemption," he concluded.

"Legal Issues and the Church" was sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board's Pastor-staff Leadership Department.

E.M. Causey, Miss. pastor for 60 years, dies Feb. 2

Emerald M. Causey, 90, a retired Southern Baptist minister, died of pneumonia Feb. 2 at Southwest Regional Medical Center in McComb.

Funeral services were held Feb. 4 at Liberty Church, where he was a longtime member. Burial followed in Liberty Cemetery.

Causey was a Baptist minister for more than 60 years. He graduated in the 1926 centennial class

of Mississippi College, and received a doctoral degree from New Orleans Seminary in 1933.

Causey helped establish several churches and served as pastor of churches in Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Washington, and Oregon. He served as director of missions for the Mississippi Association from 1963 until he retired in 1968.

Survivors include: wife, Emma Mae Causey of Kentwood, La.; son Marlin of Marietta, Ga.; daughter Carol Causey Ginn of Liberty; brother M.T. of McComb; sister Eileen Bachemin of Tallahassee, Fla.; five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.



Causey

Mt. Moriah celebrates 175th year

Mount Moriah Church, Bogue Chitto, will celebrate its 175th anniversary on March 3.

Sunday School will begin at 10 a.m. The 175th anniversary service will follow at 11 a.m.

Special activities will include preaching by former pastors, special music, and a noon meal in the fellowship hall. There will be children's games and activities until 2 p.m. A gospel singing will begin at 2 p.m., and will also include preaching by former pastors.

Danny Moss is pastor.

Arkansas team leader draws on Christian heritage

FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. (BP) — Regardless of his team's record, Arkansas quarterback Barry Lunney has concluded his college football career as a winner.

"From day one, my mother and dad were instilling Christian principles in me by the things they did, always representing actions of Christ and great character," Lunney recalled. "Because of the way they lived, I saw a need for myself to have a relationship with the Lord."

Lunney, who excelled in football, basketball, and baseball during high school, acknowledged "things came easy to me. I was in Christian cruise control."

Once he began to experience the pressure of being a major college football quarterback, however, Lunney discovered he was "trying to live my life to please the fans and the coaches."

Enduring a string of disappointing seasons, he admitted, "I was sick and tired of being on an

uneven keel — up and down. It wasn't going like I had planned for it to go."

Realizing the need to "get back to the point of what was important and what wouldn't let me down," the Razorback quarterback sensed "God was drawing me to him." Lunney responded by recommitting his life to Christ midway through his college career.

"I don't think I really understood what it meant to totally rely on the Lord until I went to college," he reflected. "If God is not in total control of your life, it's easy for other things to take priority. I finally came to the point where I told the Lord if I never played another down, I would be totally satisfied just knowing that God loves me and has a plan for me."

"When I started growing closer to God, I became more energetic and excited about living my life," he added. "No longer was my happiness dictated by how I performed on the field. I found my happiness in Christ alone."

Lunney, a member of First Church, Fort Smith, also attends First Church, Springdale, on the weekends he stays on campus. Another significant influence in his Christian growth has been involvement in Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

A frequent speaker at churches, youth rallies, and other events, Lunney is confident this year's record-setting season will provide him an ongoing opportunity to share his Christian witness.

Mission Offerings

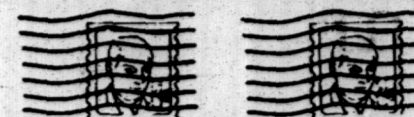
First Church, Picayune, exceeded its \$35,000 for Lottie Moon Christmas Offering with \$56,913.82, which is the largest offering ever received. Lucile Gillis is WMU director and Ernie Stuart is WMU secretary/treasurer.

Walnut Grove Church, Leake Association, has exceeded its goal of \$3,300 for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, collecting a final total of \$4,068. John H. Pace is pastor.

Handsboro Church, Gulfport, gave a record \$10,836.45 to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. RAs and GAs collected over 2,000 nickels for "End to End and Back for Jesus." David and Linda Groulx are RA and GA leaders. Gregg Thomas is pastor.

Hebron Church, Yazoo Association, set a goal of \$600 for Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. The church doubled its goal by giving \$1,200. Fuller Saunders is interim pastor.

Letters to the editor



Stop the sacrifice

Editor:

Regarding your Editor's Notebook, Jan. 4: it is good that someone speaks out. I am in agreement with you about our boys in Bosnia. I am 80 years old and have seen my uncles come home from WW I, brothers from WW II, and various kindred from all the other wars and conflicts.

My! I was even in the Post Office during WW II and had to help take out messages. How sad, how sad.

When is America going to learn to stop sacrificing our young men, especially in conflicts like Bosnia? I am ready to rise up with whoever will join. Sometimes Christians have to take a stand on all things.

Bonnie L. Cole
Bogue Chitto

Take the opportunity

Editor:

I disagree with you. I only regret that the U.S. has waited so long to send troops to Bosnia to help keep the peace.

I heard Robert Schuler say in a recent sermon how concerned the President is about sending troops

to Bosnia. He had called Schuler to pray with him.

Let's pray that the troops will use their New Testaments that are provided by the Gideons before they ship out, to witness to the Muslims and any others that they come in contact with in Bosnia that they may reap the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

Carolyn Jones
Greenwood

Wants return to KJV

Editor:

I have written to the Sunday School Board (Wayne Ozment), [to express] my disapproval of the Bible Book Study for January, February, and March, and of [the use] of the New International Version (NIV) in some of the lessons. I would like for all other pastors, Sunday School teachers, and laymen that want to stay with the King James Version to write or call the Baptist Sunday School Board and tell them so.

Edd Holloman, pastor
Corinth Church
Heidelberg

Editor's Note: The King James Version (KJV) is a masterpiece and is preferred by

many people. However, long before the KJV was published we had Wycliffe's version (1382), Tyndale's version (1525), Coverdale's version (1535), and others. In 1611 King James authorized the KJV. Many people who loved the older versions opposed the KJV. Since then, there have been dozens of translations, among which is the New International Version, certainly a good one.

Must hear the truth

Editor:

I am a PK (preacher's kid). Daddy surrendered to God's calling when I was five years old. By the time I was 15, just 10 short years, our family had gone through pastor termination, not once, but twice. So I know full well exactly how that feels and the devastating and long-lasting effect it has on a minister's family and on the church involved.

When a new pastor comes, church members, I especially, am excited that I'm going to be fed, spiritually. Then comes disappointment. Yet another seminary graduate who uses a "Bible" that paraphrases even the words of Jesus.

I am disappointed to no end with pastors who tiptoe through the Scripture, soft-pedaling through endless opportunities to tell the truth, cut and dried.

I don't go to church to have my ears tickled. I go to have my cup filled, my soul stirred. I, like all children, have an inborn need to be told, "No;" to have strong, firm instruction concerning how to better live so that my life will please God.

Too many ministers today focus too much on administration, church programs, numbers, etc., and too little on sin, the blood that was shed for that sin, the salvation made free to all through that

blood. Preach about all the good things is good but preach against the sin and about its consequences, too.

We turn to the likes of Swindoll, Hybel, Dobson, Hagee, Graham, and others in the media because they "rebuken and exhort" us as God instructed them to, as well as encourage us. They feed us. They hold our attention, stir us to action, and provoke our thoughts. They do this by telling the truth, the whole truth, the real truth, no tiptoeing!!!

Pastors need not have a college degree to be used and used mightily of God. I would far rather have an uneducated man for my pastor who was filled with the Holy Spirit and open to his leadership than one who depends on sermon books, cute quips, and jokes to get him through Sunday morning.

No, I don't like pastor termination. But I don't like starving to death spiritually either. It would have to be a very strong, blatant wrong done by a pastor for me to ever participate in his termination. But, please, "feed the flock."

Debbie Aaron
Poplarville

Blessed by church

Editor:

I have been pastor of Pass Road Church, Gulfport, for 13 years. Many times you hear only the negatives about a church. Let me give you a positive.

I have recently gone through a serious battle with liver cancer. The church expressed their love, prayer, and financial help during this time in such a way it was overwhelming. They not only gave me time to recuperate but also made sure my financial needs were met. They also hired someone to supply preach while I was out.

But this wasn't the first time they expressed their love for their

pastor. On my 10th anniversary they honored my wife and me by paying off our mortgage (\$37,000). Over the past 13 years they have in so many ways expressed their love and support for their pastor.

When I was diagnosed with cancer and told I would need surgery, the church fasted and prayed around the clock. Praying without ceasing... for my healing. Their prayers were answered. According to the doctors, I am cancer free!!

I just want everyone to know what kind of church Pass Road Church is.

Edgar Jackson, pastor
Pass Road Church
Gulfport

Vote for faithful

Editor:

I am a member of Liberty Hill Church, Pope. I would like to say in regard to "Re Human Life Bill" in the Jan. 11 issue of **The Baptist Record** that abortion is a problem in the world today. It has been done all the time and abortion will be done by some until Jesus Christ comes back. It is a shame for a pastor to say that it is not the problem. The Bible I study still teaches against it (Ex. 20:13 and Romans 13:9).

The Bible teaches that those who do this and all sins will face the judgment (Matt. 5:21 and Romans 14:9-12). Believers in Jesus Christ are his workmen (2 Tim. 2:14-16). Pastors and church people should be teaching against all sins to draw people to Christ (Jer. 23:1-2, Ezek. 3:17-18, and Acts 26:14-18). People can blame the leaders of the country for all the problems. But we all have the right to vote. We should vote for people who believe in Jesus and stand in faith.

Charles D. Martin
Batesville



LifeAnswers

Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

I am 40 years old, and it would be great to have a help-mate with whom to enjoy life. Where have all the good Christian men gone?

Statistically, the pool from which to draw a mate decreases as age increases. Most good Christian men are married or in a serious relationship by the age of 40, but that is not true for all of them. You must be cautious, however, that you know exactly what you mean in saying you want a "good Christian man." Church attendance alone doesn't make him so. What qualities in a mate are you seeking? What about interests, dislikes, and family background? What are his hurts, joys, weaknesses, and strengths? What goals do you have for the relationship and future marriage? Don't give up your quest, but don't make finding a mate your highest priority (Matt. 6:33). Also, don't make the mistake of thinking someone out there can fill your emotional and spiritual voids. Only God through Jesus Christ can do that. We are encouraged to bring our requests to God, who promises

that he will hear them. He may not answer according to your schedule, but continue to make this concern an object of your prayers to him.

Must I always take second place behind my husband's children from his first marriage?

You shouldn't have to take second place. Talk with your husband about your needs and if he does not agree with you, seek Christian counseling. Children can tear apart a second marriage, because their natural desire is to have their parents together at any cost. You must help these children understand the reality of their situation, and also be there for them as they deal with their pain. Frankly, this is one of the many consequences of divorce that could be avoided if people lived up to the vows they make to each other at the altar. Children have to live with those consequences, but they can be taught to cope by comforting parents who model the priorities of God, self, spouse, children, and other people — in that order.

Fellow church members offer gas station owner "full-service" ministry

By Joyce Sweeney Martin

FORT THOMAS, Ky. (BP) — "Full service" has taken on new meaning down at Clarence's Chevron in Fort Thomas, Ky.

A string of tragedies in owner Clarence Moermond's family almost put the station out of business. But a group of men from Highland Hills Church pitched in to keep the station open.

It all began when Moermond died suddenly of a heart attack Nov. 17, 1994. Then in January 1995, Moermond's widow had to have emergency quadruple bypass surgery while visiting a daughter in Atlanta.

In March, son Roger, 39, who had bought out the family business after his father's death, also suffered a heart attack and was unable to work. To top it off, in April, while Roger was still in the hospital recovering from angioplasty, his 34-year-old sister also had a heart attack and died in the same hospital.

That's when the men from Highland Hills Church demonstrated what "full-service" really can mean.

Gerald Sharon, pastor of the church where Roger Moermond has been a member more than 25 years,

suggested fellow church members might help keep the station open until Roger could return to work.

Church member Dick Johnston quickly organized a group of volunteers from both Clarence and Roger's Sunday School classes.

For three months, most of the 11 men worked at least one day each week. They pumped gas, put air in tires, washed windshields, and answered the phone.

They continued their hands-on ministry until Roger was able to return to work in June. And then, when in August Roger had to go back to the hospital for heart bypass surgery, the volunteers went on duty again. Each worked a half day each week until Roger returned to work in October.

This "full-service" ministry was a life-saver for the entire Moermond family. "I can't say enough for them," Roger said. "Because of them, I was able to keep the doors open. Without them, I would have lost the station."

Martin is a writer for the **Kentucky Western Recorder**.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

Names in the News



Danny Rowland (right) was recently honored for 20 years of service to **Wallerville Church, Union County**, as music director. Ray Burks (left), pastor, presented him with a plaque. Rowland and his wife Chris were given a pounding and a fellowship meal. They also received a wedding ring quilt from the women of the church.



Joel Haire was recently honored in celebration of his 15th anniversary as pastor of **First Church, Crystal Springs**. He and his wife Mary are pictured receiving a love offering given by members and friends of First Church from Stan Papizan, chairman of deacons, right.



Immanuel Church, Cleveland, honored **Ruby Webb**, (right) one of the oldest charter members, on her 91st birthday. Nell Land Williams (left) is the youngest charter member. Tommy Arinder is pastor.

Roseland Park Church, Picayune, ordained two new deacons on Jan. 14: **Terry Stockstill** and **Dana Smith** are both residents of Carriere. Ken Rhodes, director of missions for Pearl River Association, preached the ordination sermon. John G. Brock is pastor.

Argil Smith, evangelism professor at New Orleans Seminary, will teach the book of Amos at First Church, Ridgeland, Feb. 10-11. For further information, call the church office at (601) 856-6139.

Bill Barton, founder of the Homes of Grace, has been pastor of Wade Church, Jackson Associ-

ation, for the past three years. The church has experienced rapid growth of 184 additions and recently began construction of a new sanctuary.

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — **Daniel "Danny" L. Akin** is a candidate for Southern Seminary posts of vice president for academic administration and dean of the school of theology. If tapped to fill the positions, Akin would succeed David S. Dockery, who is leaving the seminary to become president of Union University, Jackson, Tenn., June 1. Dockery has been

theology school dean since 1992 and vice president for academic administration since 1993. Akin was professor of New Testament, theology and history at Criswell College from 1986-1992.

Carless Evans has written **The Joy of Christian Living** with Paula Moore. The book is designed to help new believers start the Christian life in the best way. The book can be ordered from Ebenezer Ministries, Box 45, Bailey, MS 39320, or call (601) 737-2240.

EULESS, Texas (BP) — **Ronnie Floyd**, pastor of First Church, Springdale, Ark., will be nominated for president of the **Pastors' Conference**, which meets June 9-10 in New Orleans prior to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. Claude Thomas, pastor of First Church, Euless, Texas, announced Jan. 25 he will nominate Floyd, who also is chairman of the SBC Executive Committee.

David Hale, chairman of the deacons at Strong Hope Church, Weson, was licensed to preach by that church on Dec. 24. Lowell Ingram is Strong Hope pastor.

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committee, the Convention of Oklahoma board of directors approved **Anthony Jordan** as the new executive director-treasurer. Before the near-unanimous vote, the board welcomed Jordan with a standing ovation at its special called meeting Jan. 19. He received another standing ovation after he was approved 49-1 on a secret ballot vote. At age 46, the pastor of Oklahoma City's Northwest Church becomes the third-youngest executive director-treasurer in the convention's history. He is the eighth man elected to the post. William G. Tanner, outgoing executive director-treasurer, is retiring, effective June 30.

James R. Barnette will be the guest lecturer for the Evangelism Lectureship at Mississippi College Feb. 12-13. Barnette, who serves as minister to the University at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., will address the student body and faculty/staff during the chapel program in Swor Auditorium on Monday, Feb. 12 at 10 a.m. On Tuesday, Feb. 13, he will deliver a lecture at 7 p.m. in the Hall of Fame Room. Call (601) 925-3218 for more information.

Mississippi evangelist Carroll Roberson of Ripley has filmed the first season of television programs to be aired nationwide. The program is called, "A Good Day." The program consists of gospel singing and Bible teaching. Roberson has recorded 16 gospel projects over the last nine years, and still preaches in over 20 revivals each year.

Kerry Owens, assistant professor of communication at Mississippi College, recently published an article entitled "The Religious Dimension of Presidential Campaign Rhetoric: Civil Religion and Jesse Jackson" in the journal **Paradigms: Theological Trends of the Future**.

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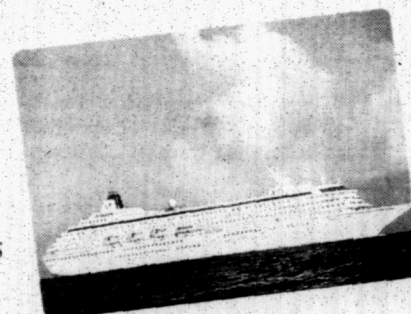
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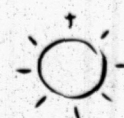
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Just for the Record

Donnie and Dimple Bond, missionary associates to Austria, are on the field (address: Hochmaissgasse B-1072, A-1130 Vienna, Austria). Both were born in Pike County and consider Syka their hometown. She is the former Dimple Conerly.

David and Gloria Glaze, missionaries to Argentina, are in the States (address: Box 536, 4329 Seminary Place, New Orleans, La. 70126). He was born in Louisville, Ky., and considers Jackson his hometown. The former Gloria Harler, she was born in Tyler, Tex., and considers Jackson her hometown.

Christopher and Karen Harbin, missionaries to Brazil, have arrived on the field to begin language study (address: Rua Barbosa da Cunha, 138, Jd. Guanabara, 13.073-320 Campinas, Brazil). Son of missionaries, he was born in Clinton, S.C., lived in Brazil while growing up, and considers Hattiesburg his hometown. He is the former Karen Goforth of South Carolina.

Hal and Lou Ann Lee are in the States (address: 4507 Fort St., Pascagoula, MS 39567). He serves as associate to area director for Europe. Born in Ruston, La., he lived in several Mississippi towns while growing up. The former Lou Ann Green, she was born in Independence, La., and also lived in several Mississippi towns.

Henry and Linda Lee, mis-

sionaries to Japan, are in the States (address: 402 Delta St., P.O. Box 3996, Tunica, MS 38676). He is a native of Clarksdale. The former Linda Jackson, she was born in New Orleans, La., and considers Hazlehurst her hometown.

Dennis and Margaret McCall, missionaries to Tanzania, are on the field (address: P.O. Box 5864, Tanga, Tanzania). He is a native of Vicksburg. The former Margaret Hill, she was born in Atlanta, Ga., and considers Louisville, Ky., her hometown.

Barry and Marleen Robinson, missionaries to Zimbabwe, are in the States (address: 508 S. Jackson, Starkville, MS 39759). A native of Georgia, he was born in Atlanta and considers Ellenwood his hometown. The former Marleen Martin, she was born in Binghamton, N.Y., and considers Houston, Texas, her hometown.

Timothy and Jan Webb, missionaries to Argentina, have arrived in Costa Rica for language study (address: Apartado 100, 2350 San Francisco de Dos, San Jose, Costa Rica). He was born in Biloxi and considers Ocean Springs his hometown. The former Jan Hannaford was born in Clarksdale and considers Moss Point her hometown.

Revival Results

Pearson, Pearl: Jan. 14-18; Allen Stephens, Pearl, evangelist; Buddy Casey, Warner Robbins, Ga., music; four professions of faith; three by letter; Wayne Long, pastor.

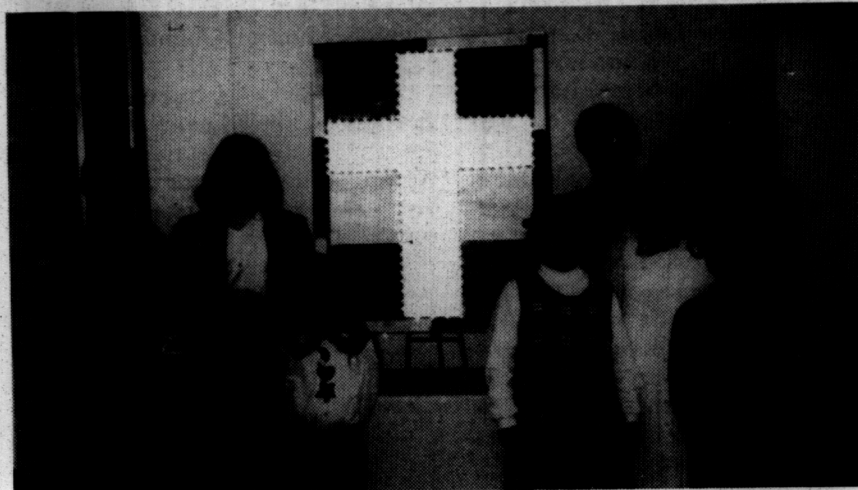
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Mississippi College School of Law has been named the 12th best law school for women in the nation, out of a total of 168 law schools surveyed. **The National Jurist**, a law student publication, released the poll of American Bar Association-accredited law schools in its October/November 1995 issue. The rankings were based on three primary factors including percentages of women in the student body and faculty; equal treatment of female students, based on a survey of 18,000 students conducted by the Princeton Law Review; and the opportunities for women to advance to leadership positions, based on percentages of women represented in leadership positions. "I think this says a lot about how the Mississippi College School of Law is perceived nationally," said J. Richard Hurt, dean of the School of Law. Howard Todd, president of Mississippi College, noted that the rankings included nearly all the ABA-accredited law schools in the nation, and the high ranking is evidence of the quality of the faculty, staff, and students.

First Church, Water Valley, will conduct a First Place workshop on Feb. 17, from 9-11:30 a.m. with lunch following. First Place is a Christ-centered fitness program with emphasis on weight control. To make reservations by Feb. 14 call (601) 473-2230.

Mississippi College will hold the first of three Spring Preview Days on Feb. 17. Preview Day is a time for prospective students and their parents to see the college and what it has to offer. Many activities will take place for students and parents, including campus tours, academic advising, and workshops on the admissions/financial aid process. For reservations, contact the Office of Admissions at (800) 738-1236.

Gulf Coast Medical Center will introduce Mississippi's first bloodless medicine and surgery program with an open house, Feb. 10, from 1-4 p.m. Melvin Satter-



Calvary Church, Meridian, set a goal of \$5,000 for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, but after intensive promotion by various organizations, the final total was \$8,668.15. The Children's Discipleship Training class participated in the third annual "Moonwalk for Lottie." Pictured from left, back row, are Susan Wright, Children's Discipleship Training leader; Christy Horton; Ann Taylor, WMU director; Vickie Thorne, Girls in Action leader; front row, Kristen Price; Ashley Carmichael; Madalyn Ivy; Alisha Hudnell; and Tristan Taylor. H.M. Smith is pastor.

field, who coordinates the program for adult patients who do not wish to receive blood transfusions, said the event will include information and equipment used in bloodless medicine and surgery, including a cell saver, a machine that continually circulates the patient's own blood during surgical procedures. Bloodless medicine experts will also be on hand to answer questions and give tours of the hospital. Call 1-800-318-4954 for further details.

Stephen L. Carter, author of **The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion**, will address the annual Convocation of the Mississippi College School of Law. The event will be held Feb. 15 at 3 p.m. in the House Chamber of the Old Capitol at 100 South State St., Jackson.

Scott County Crusade for Christ will be held Feb. 12 at Forest Church, Forest. The rally will be held at 7 p.m. with choir rehearsal at 6 p.m. The evangelist will be Frank Pollard, pastor of First Church, Jackson, and the music will be directed by Larry Black, minister of music at First



Betty Davis, member of **Newhebron Church**, Lawrence Association, won second place for the above "float" in the novelty division of the Newhebron Christmas Parade. She donated the \$10 prize to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions at her church.

Church, Jackson. Sonny Adkins is pastor of Forest Church.

Fred McWhorter of Portrayal Ministries in Lindale, Texas, will portray the apostle Peter in the Sunday morning worship service at **Woodmarket Church, Biloxi**, on Feb. 11.



First Church, Coldwater, recently presented a \$62,000 gift to the Foreign Mission Board. The gift originated from the estate of the late Corinne Raney, whose will specified that \$50,000 be given to the Lottie Moon Offering through her church. The church then exceeded its offering goal of \$9,500, and presented the gift to Lewis Myers (right), vice president of the Foreign Mission Board, on Jan. 17. Shirley Ferguson (left) is director of Women on Mission. Bob Maddux is pastor.

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Staff Changes

Northside Church, Clinton, has called **John D. Hendrix** as pastor effective Jan. 1. A native of Kansas City, Mo., he is a graduate of Southwest University, William Jewell College, Midwestern Seminary, and New Orleans Seminary. He previously served as professor of Christian Education at Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky.



Hendrix



Kennedy

Concord Church, Booneville, has called **Gary Kennedy** as minister of music and youth. A native of Memphis, he is a recent graduate of Blue

Mountain College. His previous place of service was Spring Hill Church, Marshall County.

Main Street Church, Goodman, has called **Levon Moore** as interim pastor effective Jan. 28. Moore, retired director of missions for Attala Association, lives in Kosciusko.

Richmond Church, Tupelo, has called **Sean Tutor Sr.** as pastor. A native of Pontotoc, Tutor is a student at Mississippi Baptist Seminary in Tupelo. His previous place of service was Horseshoe Church, Holmes County.



Tutor

Bob Hickey has accepted the pastorate of **Union Church, Sardis,** effective Jan. 21. He was formerly pastor of Walnut Church.

David Vincent Brown assumed the position of minister of education and music for Liberty Church, Flowood, on Jan. 14. He is a graduate of Belmont College and New Orleans Seminary. Brown has served as minister of youth and music in churches in Tennessee and Louisiana.



Brown

First Church, Rolling Fork, has called **Millard Lee Caulder** as pastor effective Jan. 28. He is a graduate of Mississippi College and New Orleans Seminary. He previously served at Rio Vista Church, Jefferson, La.



Caulder

Just for the Record

Liberty Church, Flowood, will hold its barbeque chicken dinner on Feb. 10, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Originally scheduled for Feb. 3, it was postponed because of inclement weather. Proceeds will benefit a mission project.

BeachReach '96 launches national student outreach

NASHVILLE (BP) — Approximately 600 college students representing more than 50 churches and Baptist Student Unions in 14 states will share their faith with Spring Break '96 revelers at three Florida beach resorts.

BeachReach '96 will involve students in personal witnessing March 9-15 in Panama City Beach, March 16-22 in Clearwater Beach and March 23-29 in Daytona Beach. The program is a joint effort of the Baptist Sunday School Board's National Student Ministry (NSM), the Student Ministries Department of the Florida Convention, and the evangelism section of the Home Mission Board.

According to NSM consultant Bob Hartman, BeachReach is designed "to give college students

the opportunity to share their faith in Christ with fellow students in a natural, caring way."

Students will minister in small groups, he said, adding a variety of outreach activities are planned, such as pancake breakfasts; free van rides for spring break students; passing out sunscreen to students on the beach; playing volleyball, tug-of-war and other beach games; and coffeehouses featuring live entertainment.

Baptist Student Union and church college groups unable to participate in BeachReach '96 can still play a vital role in the project's success by providing prayer support, Hartman said. A special prayer guide can be obtained by calling the NSM office at (615) 251-2777.

Baptist colleges' enrollments up for 14th consecutive year

NASHVILLE (BP) — Enrollment at the 50 Southern Baptist-related colleges and universities showed an overall increase for the fall semester for the 14th consecutive year, according to figures released to the Education Commission.

Statistics for the 1995 fall semester show 108,146 students attended the 50 Southern Baptist colleges and universities, a less than 1% increase over the 1994

total of 107,263. The additional 883 student increase is down from a 2.4% increase from 1993-94.

Following is the Mississippi 1995 fall enrollment figures and the percentage of increase or decrease from fall 1994 to fall 1995.

Mississippi: Blue Mountain College, 432, down 1.1%; Mississippi College, 3,245, down 9.6%; William Carey College, 2,172, up 1.5%.

Cal Guy's worry: church doing "business as usual"

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP) — Calling for a new paradigm in missions giving, Cal Guy said the evangelical church is at a crossroads in reaching the world for Christ.

"There has never been a time in the history of the world when reports of people saved and congregations established were as thick and furious and encouraging as they are now," said Guy, visiting professor of missions at Southeastern Seminary, at the Wake Forest, N.C., campus Jan. 31.

Christians must redouble their efforts to be about the Father's business at this critical juncture, Guy said, adding, "I have no right to simply enjoy God's grace without sharing it."

But, Guy said, "Our giving is not keeping up with our volunteering." Noting there are upwards of 3,000 candidates in the Foreign Mission Board pipeline prepared to go around the world in the name of Christ, he stated: "Unless giving increases, they're not all going to be able to go."

He estimated that within the next

five years there will be more missionaries from non-English speaking countries than from the United States. "These people seem to be more obedient than we are," he added.

Guy, who taught missions at Fort Worth's Southwestern Seminary for 36 years, denied his statements were simply an insincere cheerleader's "rah-rah," noting, "God is at work in a brand new way."

Yet Guy said he is not confident evangelicals in the United States are up to the task. "I have such a fear that we will throw it away because we are going to keep on doing business as usual," said Guy, who many suggest has taught more missionaries than anyone else in Baptist life during his tenure at Southwestern.

Guy told the Southeastern audience while Southern Baptist foreign missions efforts are being guided by "the best leadership team" the Foreign Mission Board has ever had, a lack of commitment to missions giving within the church threatens to betray the current opportunity to reach the world for Christ.

Bibliocipher

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Uniform Portrait of God's mercy



By David Mitchell
Jonah 3-4

Jonah was appointed to go to Nineveh to cry against it. After failing to obey God's initial call, Jonah obeyed God's second call and went to Nineveh to preach God's judgment against the people.

Jonah obeyed God (3:1-4). Reading the book of Jonah, one will find that Chapter 3, verses 1-2 are very similar to Chapter 1; verses 1-2. God simply repeated his command, and this time Jonah obeyed. These verses help us understand that God is insistent that his will *will* be accomplished. Jonah arose (v. 3), this time to go to Nineveh rather than flee to Tarsus.

Depending on Jonah's starting point, the trip to Nineveh would have been approximately 500 land miles. Traveling by the usual mode of transportation, it would have taken Jonah approximately one month. Verses 2 and 3 tell us that Nineveh was a great city — great because of its size and because of its importance. It would have taken Jonah approximately three days to preach throughout greater Nineveh including the surrounding towns and villages, which would form a circuit approximately 60 miles in circumference. Another way to view a three-day journey is to understand that the city had irregular streets. Traveling the streets proclaiming God's message would take three days.

Whatever the size of the city and the meaning of the word great, we can easily derive from God's action that the city was great to God and the people were very important to him.

The people believed (3:5). The people of Nineveh not only heard Jonah's message but they believed that it was one to be taken seriously. Their desire was to avoid being the object of God's destructive judgment. The action of the Ninevites can be summarized in three words: they "believed..., declared..., and put on..." Jonah's preaching produced what all preachers desire: great revival, which was city-wide. The revival took place because the Ninevites believed God. The preaching and Bible teaching of today should lead us to understand that we must also repent of our sins. We must come to the point that the city of Nineveh came to, and believe that God's judgment will ultimately fall upon the life of every man, woman, boy and girl who has reached the age of accountability.

Judgment is withheld by God (3:10). Because the Ninevites turned from their evil, God turned from his evil. A good way to understand this is described by D. Stewart: "When Nineveh repented, God relented." It is interesting to see that of all the activity of the people of Nineveh — fasting, wearing of sack cloth, calling on God, and turning from evil — only the last is what caught God's attention: repentance.

What a joy it is to read in these verses that the Ninevites recognized their condition before the Lord. We as well should recognize our condition before the Lord and join the city of Nineveh in repenting of our wrongs. God is always compassionate to those who cry out for mercy. The story of God's mercy intricately weaves its way throughout the book of Jonah. Jonah, like the city of Nineveh, had been the object of God's anger, but as Scripture reveals, both received God's miraculous redeeming mercy.

Jonah's anger questioned by God (4:1-5). In verse 1 of Chapter 4, we find that there is anger, displeasure, and a lack of understanding of God's activity. Jonah literally hated what God had done. There are many different theories as to what caused Jonah to be so angry. It may be best for us to think of this as a prophet who misunderstood God's mercy and did not fully understand God's plan to redeem people other than the nation of Israel.

The tremendous lesson to be learned in the concluding verses of Jonah is that often times, God moves in a way we do not understand. God may at times move and probably will move in a manner that is completely opposite to our desires. It is at this time that we must come to a good understanding of who God is and a complete understanding of his character. Jonah missed the opportunity to celebrate with the city of Nineveh and to celebrate with God because of his selfishness.

Mitchell is pastor of Van Winkle Church, Jackson.

Bible Book Prayer, godly behavior



By Clayton Littlejohn
1 Timothy 2

Paul's instructions on prayer and godly living emphasize that each person has the responsibility to pray and live a godly life. These instructions insinuate that the Ephesian believers were not praying or living godly lives.

A call to pray for all people (vv. 1-2). Paul revealed the priority of prayer in verse 1: "first of all." In most American churches we spend more time taking the offering than we do in prayer. Jesus said of the temple, "My house shall be called the house of prayer" (Matt. 21:13). Today believers are the temple and most are in need of cleansing.

Paul listed four types of prayer for believers: 1) Supplications, meaning to make humble entreaty to God; 2) Prayers, acts of worship through personal communications; 3) Intercessions, meaning to get involved (the lostness of people becomes our burdens and we get involved in bringing them before God's throne of grace); 4) Giving thanks, meaning every prayer should reveal our thankfulness to God for what he has done and continues doing through our prayers.

In verse 2, Paul states that we should pray "for kings and all in authority." Today there is much criticism about our leaders. If we really want to see change in America, let's quit criticizing and start supplicating, interceding, and giving thanks for our leaders. More change will come if our leaders come to salvation in Jesus than all the politicking between parties. We should pray for our leaders every time we meet for worship.

God desires the salvation of all people (vv. 3-7). Prayer is "good and acceptable in the sight of God" (v. 3). Why? Because prayer brings people to God, and "he desires all men to be saved" (v. 4). We know everyone won't be saved (Matt. 22:14), but we don't know who will, so we should pray for everyone we know. It's God's desire to save them, so let's bring them before his throne.

How does God save the lost? Through Christ Jesus, the one and only Mediator (v. 5). Jesus is the one and only High Priest who can intervene for man. Our prayers go through Jesus. Only when prayer is in his name will the Father accept it. Jesus is Mediator because "he gave himself as a ransom for all" (v. 6). The word ransom here is special. It not only means he paid for us, but he also became the victim instead of us. What a wonderful God and Saviour we have!

In verse 7 Paul defended his position as an apostle, preacher, and a teacher against the false teachers in the church and stated that his messages are from God, not a myth.

Proper personal behavior (vv. 8-15). Paul's message is for "men to pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands" (v. 8). It was a Jewish custom to kneel and pray towards Jerusalem (Dan. 6:10), while raising both hands, as bowing to a king. The lifting of holy hands symbolized a pure heart and life (2 Sam. 22:21; Psalm 24:1). If our hearts and lives are not clean, God will not hear our prayers (Psalm 66:18).

Paul addressed women's behavior in the church in verses 9 and 15. There were women in the church who dressed to draw attention to themselves, and demanded their right to fill the pulpit. A woman of godly behavior will dress moderately so as not to make a poor woman feel out of place; she has no desire to catch the eye of a man. There is nothing wrong with nice clothes, certain hair styles, or jewelry if worn for right reasons. If women really want to be beautiful, they should let their godly works reveal their inner beauty. This beauty is available to rich or poor (v. 10).

In verses 11, 12, Paul said women are to listen and learn, not stand and preach. This has nothing to do with equality. We are all one in Christ (Gal. 3:28). These are God's principles, not Paul's. The man was established as the head of the home and the leader of the church. In verses 13, 14 we see what happened when Eve usurped Adam's authority; she was deceived and fell into sin. Adam fell too, but he wasn't deceived. He chose to sin. "She shall be saved in childbearing" (v. 15) does not mean salvation, but it means rescued from the stigma of causing all of us to fall into sin. How? By raising godly children through continued "faith, love, holiness, and self restraint." These virtues govern our personal behavior and bring glory to our Lord.

Littlejohn is pastor of Ingram Church, Baldwyn.

Life and Work Difficult people



By Linda Donnell
Matthew 5

The story is told of how an army sergeant became a Christian. In his company was a Christian private who was constantly ridiculed. Each night the young man would come in exhausted and kneel to pray. One evening as the soldier knelt beside his cot, the sergeant came in and observed the prayer ritual. He cursed the young man and threw his boots at him, causing him to fall. The private said nothing but continued to pray. The next morning the sergeant awoke to find his boots, polished and shined, beside his bed. His heart was so touched that he immediately sought the source of the young soldier's strength. This is an example of how Jesus taught the disciples to deal with difficult people.

Retaliation (vv. 38-42). Jesus began his discussion on the law of retaliation with the quote "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (Ex. 21:24). This was not a command but a restraint to prevent people from forcing the offender to pay more than the offense deserved. Instead of getting revenge, Jesus stressed that his disciples should have the attitude of love and forgiveness and be willing to suffer loss rather than causing another to suffer.

"If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also" (v. 39). Rarely will we be slapped on the face, but over and over in life we will be handed insults of various kinds. Jesus is saying that we should answer this type of behavior with love. If you retaliate with the same kind of treatment, the problem is compounded; you make an enemy. But it will be difficult for one to hate you if you return good for evil. If, however, the insults continue, we have the assurance that God is with us and is ultimately in control (John 16:33b).

Not only did Jesus teach that his disciples should turn the other cheek, but they should give more than what is asked for (v. 40) and they should "go the extra mile" (v. 41). In a selfish "me" generation, this may not be easy. It is much more likely that we would want our "rights." In many cases, we do as little as we can and go no further. This is the way of the world. The attitude of Christ is away from a concentration on "me" and "my personal liberties" and toward a concentration on service to others.

Love of enemies (vv. 43-47). The Jewish leaders took the command "thou shalt love thy neighbor" to infer that "thou shalt hate thine enemy" (v. 43). Jesus countered this with perhaps his highest demand as he said to "love your enemies" (v. 44). Not only are we to love our enemies, we are to pray for those who wrong us. Christ knew the power of prayer to diffuse a situation. Nothing can change the attitude of the mind like opening it to God in prayer. It is impossible to bow before God in true submission and pray for a person who has wronged us and continue to hate that person.

Why does God demand so much of his followers? Why does the price of discipleship have to be so high? The answer is simple: So that we will be like God. His purpose from the beginning, as he created man in the image of God, was for us to carry on his work. "By this shall man know that you are my disciples" (John 13:35).

Be ye perfect (v. 48). Here you may be ready to balk. Jesus demands that we love our enemies and now he says to be perfect. Impossible!! God knows that no man can be perfect as Jesus, but he is calling us to a maturity or completeness in our spiritual life. As an earthly father would for his children, God calls for the best in his followers.

God's call to discipleship is a high call indeed. All that Jesus said in this passage goes against human nature and a society that emphasizes personal rights. Yet, as with the young private, what better witness to the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives than to be able to turn the other cheek, to go beyond what is expected of us and to love regardless! This is part of the job description for the Christian.

Donnell is a member of First Church, Hattiesburg.



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